

INTERNET ACCESS FOR CALIFORNIA CLASSROOMS

(Adopted by Convention Delegates May 2000)

Reviewed by Board of Managers November 2010

- WHEREAS,** The California State PTA believes that all children and youth should receive a quality, comprehensive and diversified education to encourage equal opportunities for maximum individual development; and
- WHEREAS,** Effective use of educational technology has been linked to positive measurable differences in student achievement, attitudes, school attendance, and interaction with educators and peers; and
- WHEREAS,** California ranks the lowest of all 50 states in the ratio of students to instructional computers and 44th in the ratio of students to Internet-connected computers, with only 67% of California schools having Internet access; and
- WHEREAS,** To fully integrate technology into curriculum, schools need compatible hardware and software including safeguards, Internet connections, training for staff, and support and maintenance for equipment; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts support efforts to wire every California classroom and to bring hardware, integrated curriculum, training for staff and parent/school volunteers and funding for ongoing technology support; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts support legislation to meet technology needs on a statewide basis, with a continuing effort to link all California classrooms to the World Wide Web and other evolving technologies.

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Continued on next page

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

According to a recent national survey by Education Market Research, in California the student per Internet-connected computer ratio is 19.3 students to 1 computer, whereas the national ratio is 13.6 students to 1 computer. Only 67% of California schools have Internet access from one or more classrooms.

A recent report by the U.S. Department of Commerce, entitled “Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide,” noted that at the end of 1998 over 49% of American households had computers and 25% had Internet access, and that computer ownership and Internet access increase with income.

Regardless of income level, Americans living in rural areas lag behind in Internet access. At the lowest income levels, those in urban areas are more than twice as likely to have Internet access than those earning the same income in rural areas. People with higher educational levels are more likely to have a computer at home and to have home Internet access.

Access to the Internet offers students the opportunity to find information quickly and easily from institutions such as the Library of Congress, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, university libraries and government entities. Internet access enlarges the world of information available to students, supplements their school curriculum and provides students an opportunity to engage in interactive educational projects with others in remote locations. Internet access in California classrooms would also provide increased benefits to teachers.

Wiring California classrooms will promote equal opportunity for all students to participate in the larger world of information available through the Internet.